An Essay on

Mentis et Cerebrum

Respectfully Submitted

to the Faculty of the

Homeopathic Medical College

of

Pennsylvania

on the

Twenty Seventh day of January

Eighteen Hundred & Fifty four

by

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It was for a long time a subject of discussion among the ancient Physiologists, to fix upon the exact seat of the mind. A great diversity of opinion existed between learned and eminent men, those fully competent to investigate all important points in Physiology, yet still, they remained unsettled and undecided, as to the exact seat of the mental faculties, each considering his own Theory the correct one. But recent investigations have thrown light upon this subject, and lifted the veil which had been so long thrown over the minds of our illustrious predecessors. It is now generally admitted by the later Physiologists and Philosophers, that the organ of the mind, is the brain, as their numerous

experiments have established the fact.

The perfect action of the mind is at all times desirable, and to have this perfect action it is necessary that the brain be in a healthy condition. The Brain receives a greater supply of blood, than any other organ in the human economy, even in the foetus in utero, a greater quantity of blood is distributed to the brain, than to the lower extremities.

It is estimated that about one-tenth of all the blood sent from the heart, goes to the brain. Now why is this? It is because the mind being active increases the demand for arterial blood to sustain this action. Now unless this demand is supplied by pure arterial blood, the mind becomes dormant, its faculties blunted,

and sensibility, and consciousness becomes extinct; for if the blood be impure and imperfectly oxygenated, it then fails to afford a proper degree of stimulus, and the consequence is depression, and inactivity of the mental faculties, and derangement of the nervous functions, evidenced by hysteria and a tendency to headache, the mind is not competent to perform its healthy action, the person becomes indifferent and gloomy, and all external objects annoy him, and unless this impurity of the blood is early remedied, total aberration of intellect ensues. The Brain when moderately brought into activity, by the proper exercise of the mind, gradually expands, and increases in size and strength, thereby, giving free and untrammelled sway to all the intelectual powers,

and if this activity be kept within the bounds of reason, all the other parts of the system, grows in strength in the same proportion, and the reward is, a healthy body, free from pain and all the debilitating diseases to which flesh is heir. That there is a relation existing between the powers of the mind, and the development of the brain, is very evident.

As an illustration of this fact, take the brain of an infant, which is as yet in a very imperfect state. Here we have a very feeble development of the mental faculties, the infant possesses but little more than the common instinct of animals, performing no motions, and articulating no sounds, that would lead you to suspect that they were guided by reason, and the mandates of the will. But, as the child grows older,

and the brain becomes more fully developed, the faculties of the mind, also, increase, its movements are then guided by the dictates of a more vigorous, although yet feeble mind. and as the child merges into manhood, the brain becomes more perfectly formed, and he is endowed with all those noble faculties of a mature mind, which places him so far above the level of the brute creation.

But if on the contrary, the brain be not brought into action, by the proper cultivation of the mind, the organ becomes enfeebled, and is not competent to perform all the important functions which necessarily falls to its lot, it decreases in bulk, the health of the body is impaired, and the intellectual faculties remain undeveloped, and consequently are inadequate to perform the mental powers.

with that degree of energy and decision which it is important that it at all times should do. We have evidence of this effect of inactivity of the brain, on the body, in the pale emaciated females of our great cities, who are brought up in the halls of luxury, and wealth, with nothing to engage their attention, or to interest the mind. And can I not say, with a tolerable degree of safety, that to this inactivity of mind and body, we can attribute the majority, if not all of those debilitating diseases, which so harass the females of our cities. They sink into a state of nervousness, and mental sloth, which sows the seeds of Chlorosis, Hysteria, Leucorrhoea and all those affections of the uterus, which are so much the terror of the young female, and by this derangement of the healthy functions of the uterus,

they are doomed to suffer all the agonies of the body, and are finally brought to a premature grave. Few Mothers are aware of the influence, the mind has over the body, in producing, or preventing disease, or, I think they would pursue a different plan than they at present do, in regard to the rearing, and education of their daughters. The importants of the brain is manifested, by the security with which it is guarded. It is situated in the cavity of the cranium, surrounded on all sides by hard bony walls, to protect it from external injury. These walls are composed of two plates of bone, of different degrees of hardness. The external plate is somewhat soft and yielding, the internal is hard and brittle, to resist punctures,

or wounds of pointed instruments. Between these two plates is a soft spongy layer of bone, called the diploë, this is supposed to be intended, to diminish the vibrations, produced by blows on the external plate, and, thus more effectually guard the brain from the concussion, that might result from an injury of this kind. Nor does this constitute all the safe-guards, with which it is provided Besides these bony walls, it is surrounded by hard, firm, and durable membranes, called the Dura Mater, Arachnoid, and Pia Mater. These membranes embrace the brain on all sides, forming a firm protection to its substance, so that, although the external bony wall may be broken, they prevent any foreign body, from lodging in the substance of the brain.

Now, this is one of the most beautiful provis-
-ions of nature, for, were the brain not so
securely guarded, it would be liable at
any moment, to sustain injuries, which
would completely derange the functions
of all the other organs of the system.
The brain is the great machine shop
of the body, It is here, that all the plans
are concocted, which control the various
movements of the different parts of the
human system, all the other organs,
look to it for guidance, and instruc-
-tion, in respect to their actions, and were
all communication between them and
the brain, cut off, they would cease to
perform their usual functions. To the
muscles of the body, the Brain imparts
that influence, which causes them to

act, thus producing the different move-
-ments of the parts in which they are
located. To the eye, it imparts that
influence which gives it the power of
seeing. The Ear, it endows with the fac-
-ulty of hearing. Now that I have assum-
-ed the brain to be the seat of sensation, it
remains for me to describe the medium, through
which it perceives the impressions, made
on all parts of the body, and, also, the means
by which the different parts are brought
under the influence of the mind. There is
a mutual dependance of all portions of
the machinery of organic life, upon each
other, how, therefore, without some regular
line of intelligence, between all the organs,
are they to convey mutual information, of
their several conditions. To supply this

necessary medium of communication, Providence has furnished all the animals, that possess distinct organs, with a peculiar apparatus, called the nervous system, at the head of, and presiding over all, is situated the Brain. The brain, or Cerebro-spinal centre, sends out numerous rounded, and flattened white cords, called the nerves; which are distributed to all the textures of the body. It is by means of these nerves, that a communication is established, between the brain, and every part of the body; they receive impressions of external objects made on them, and communicate it to the brain, where sensation is perceived. The operations of the brain and nerves, are similar to the operations of the Galvanic Battery and the telegraph

wires, The Battery has its wires distributed in every direction, over the face of the country; they receive and transmit intelligence of the condition of the parts to which they are respectively distributed, Now if one of these wires be cut, all communication between the Battery, and the part to which it is distributed, is intercepted, No intelligence can be conveyed along that wire, from one Battery to the other. Thus it is in the human system. The human Brain is the Galvanic Battery, and the nerves are the telegraphic wires. These nerves are so minutely distributed over all parts of the body, that the point of the smallest needle cannot penetrate the skin, but that these nerves with the rapidity of lightning, convey the impression to the brain, and warns it of the danger to which the part is exposed

and the mandate of the brain is conveyed through another set of nervous fibres, to the muscles, upon which the first impression was made, and excites them to action, that they may defend themselves from the threatened danger. With such rapidity is this performed, it would appear, that they acted simultaneously; but before these muscles can act, this impression of external objects, made on the nerves, must be conveyed along the sensitive nerves, to the brain, where sensation is perceived, and then the mandate of the will is returned through the medium of the motor nerves, to the part affected; but there is no perceptible interval between the act of the will, and the motion of the part. If one of these nerves be severed, there can be no communication between

the brain, and the part to which it is distributed; if its distal extremity be irritated, there will be no sensation felt in it, it may be pricked, cut or injured in any way and the person will not be conscious of it. But if the extremity next the brain be irritated, you will then have sensation, and the irritation will be referred to the part to which it was distributed, before it was severed. If both sensative and motor nerves be divided, then all usefulness of the part will be destroyed. But, if the sensative nerve alone be divide, then the sensation of the part only will be destroyed, and the motion will be retained. Thus, if we divide the sensative nerve of the ear, the faculty of hearing will be destroyed, or the sensative nerve of the eye, the power of sight

will be destroyed, although in both instances, the power of motion will be retained; or vice versa, the motors may be divided, and sensation retained. These facts proved by actual experiment on the lower animals, go to establish the Brain, as the seat of the mental faculties; for we have seen, that when a part, that is usually under the control of the will, has its communication with the brain intercepted, that then the mind or will has no more control over it. But there are functions of the body, over which the Will has no control. The functions of respiration, digestion, and circulation, are not controled by the dictates of the mind, they are involuntary functions, and act irrespective of the mandates of the mind, for when we are asleep, and the faculties of the mind lie dormant, these organs

still continue their functions. And how wise was this in the maker of the universe, for if these organs so important to the continuation of life, were subject to the control of all the freaks, and whims, of the mind, how often would they be sadly neglected. But although they are not entirely under the control of the will, they are in a greater or less degree, influenced by the state of the mind. Thus, we see that the effect produced upon the mind of soldiers, on first going to battle, has very frequently caused in them Diarrhoea. Any sudden intelligence of an alarming nature, such as the death of a near and dear relative, has caused such excessive grief, as to seriously derange the digestive functions. But I know of no instance where death has been caused directly, by the voluntary suspension of any one of the functions.

We cannot by an act of the will, suspend the contractions of the heart, thereby, causing the circulation of the blood through the arteries to cease. No one can long suspend the movements of respiration, for the instinctive feelings will not brook the capricious interference of the will; nevertheless, if the communication between the organs of respiration, and the seat of the Will, the brain, be not continued and kept in a perfect state of health that function will be impaired. It requires a sound and well developed brain, to carry on the functions of digestion, circulation, and respiration, with efficiency and regularity. As man grows older, the brain becomes infeebled, and is sooner exhausted when forced to protracted and vigorous exercise. Thus we see in the aged, that it is no longer capable to perform its usual

function with such a degree of perfection;
their several senses are not as acute as they
were in their younger days, when the brain was
in its full vigor; the power of vision is greatly
impaired; the acuteness of hearing is diminished,
the digestive functions give way, and nutrition
is impaired, thereby, causing a general emacia-
-tion of the whole human fabric. Now that
the action of the brain has such an influence
over every part of the body, how important it is
that it should be an organ of especial attention,
and every precaution used to preserve it in as
perfect a state as possible. It being the seat
of the mind, it is often called into an exc-
-essive degree of excitement, by the intense exe-
-rcise of the mental faculties. In this respect,
it is very frequently abused. The more concen-
-trated the action of the brain the sooner

will it become exhausted. We see in the Astron-
-omer, or Chemist, where their whole time is devo-
-ted to the pursuit of one subject, that their brain
is often overexcited, and there springs up in
them various nervous diseases, whereas, if they
would set aside a portion of their time, for
the pursuit of other objects, it would be the means
of diverting the attention of the mind from their
favorite employment, thus allowing a proper
interval of rest, and give time for the excessive
vascular excitement of the brain, in part to
subside. The Physician, who is called on to
administer to the wants of the sick, should alw-
-ays remember the affect which the condition
of the mind has upon the disease of his patient.
If he neglects this important point, he may
prescribe his remedies for the disease, but he
will not experience their full efficacy, so long

as the mind of the patient, dwells with distrust upon their real usefulness; he should, if possible, divert the mind from the contemplation of the ills of the body. The idea of danger, is almost constantly connected with every painful feeling of the body, a trifling inconvenience, is readily magnified into a serious evil. It is the duty of the Physician, to relieve his patient, by the best means in his power; he should, therefore, employ them in such a manner, as will produce the best possible effect; and whether they be administered through the medium of the mind, or by the agency of the stomach, it matters not provided the greatest advantage be procured. The Physician possesses the power of controling the mind of his patient to a considerable extent, and he can exert this power to the production of good or evil.

He can by encouraging words, inspire his patient with confidence in his skill, and the hope of a speedy recovery, keeps his spirits buoyant, thereby giving the medicinal agents every opportunity to produce the desired effects. Whereas, on the other hand, if he pursue a different course, and allows the mind of the patient to become possessed with numerous groundless fears, they will in no small degree, tend to counteract the good effects of the medicine. Therefore, it is highly important, that the Physician, should always appear cheerful, and lively, in the presence of his patients. If he has some fears, as to the failure of his remedies, and that there is danger to the safety of the patient, he should not allow him to discover his fears, as long as it is consistent to keep them concealed from him.

Thus, I have endeavored to show the intimate relations, existing between mind and matter; and in consideration of this fact, it leads us to acknowledge, that a proper cultivation of the mental faculties, is highly conducive to the happiness of the individual. A person with a well trained mind, has many advantages over him, whose mental faculties have never been an object of especial attention
In this land of liberty where the avenues to learning, are open to all, ignorance should be considered a crime; and it is to the parents, and guardians, of the youth, of our land, that this crime is to be attributed: to their care, is intrusted the proper training of their minds, and they should be responsible for their success, or failure in life. It is the nature of youth, to dislike the labor of

the mind, their disposition is to seek pleasure, in the light amusements of the day, free from the toil, and perplexities, of study; therefore, it devolves upon their guardians, to have recourse to every means to render the acquisition of knowledge attractive, and easily accessible. Many become disgusted with study, by being too early, and closely, confined, to the tediousness of the school room. This should not be, time should be allowed them, for agreable recreation, thus allowing their physical powers to be developed equally with their mental. They should be led on, step by step, as they advance in years, from the lighter topics of study, to those which require more thought, and more careful investigation to be able to grasp. From the dry and difficult study of Mathematics, to the more pleasing,

and delightful study of Physiology, and Astr-
-onomy. By so doing, they are enticed along,
until it is no longer a task to pursue the
subjects which interest, and instruct the
minds. The frequent contemplation of
such subjects, tends to enlarge the capa-
-city of the mind, to ennoble the human
faculties, and raise the soul above the gro-
-velling affections, and vicious pursuits;
for the dispositions of mankind, and their
active pursuits, generally correspond to
the train of thought, in which they most
frequently indulge. If their thoughts run
among viscious objects, such will be the
general character of their affections and
conduct. If the train of thinking, take a
more elevated range, the train of their
actions, and the passions they display,

will, in some measure, be correspondent.
The moral advantages, arising from a
cultivated mind, therefore is very great.
Can we suppose, that a man whose mind
has been carefully trained, would degrade
himself, below the level of the brutes, by a daily
indulgance, in rioting and drunkenness, un-
-til his faculties were benumbed, and his
body found wallowing in the mire,
Were their mental faculties rightly
instructed in all those beautiful sciences,
which so enlighten the mind, in view of
right and wrong, they could not be guilty
of those abominable cruelties, which some
scenes so mournfully display, The acqu-
-isition of the knowledge of the various
sciences, is directly opposed to the degra-
-ding pursuits, and passions, which have

contaminated the society of our world,
and entailed misery on our species.
It is principally among the ignorant,
that crime and depravity prevail, there-
-fore, every one in whom it predominates,
is more easily led to perpetrate deeds of
villiany and blood. Look at the millions
of degraded heathen, whose vocabulary is
limited, whose thoughts and emotions are
few and uniform, and whose pleasures
are merely animal, their existance,
instead of being like angels, intelligent
and active, is either like that of a carniv-
-orous beast, that feasts on blood, or the stupid
toad that lies for ages, senseless, in the solid
rock. On the other hand, he whose mind
is well stored with useful knowledge, is
capable of appreciating the numerous blessings,

which the "divine ruler of the universe," in his infinite goodness, has seen fit to bestow upon the creatures of this world. He is capable of admiring the beauties of nature, in all their varied forms, and of tracing them to their origin, from the "supreme being." The solitary student, who in his lonely cell, trims his midnight lamp, is looked upon by the ignoramus, as one beside himself. But could he experience the enjoyments, that the student derives from the prosecution of his studies, and the numerous sources of real pleasure, which they point out to him, methinks he would have sufficient reason to change his opinion with regard to his insanity

Those who care nothing for life beyond its animal wants, and sensations, whose

sum of happiness is made up of eating, drinking, and sleeping, cannot be said to live, and enjoy life, but like the soulless brute, they merely stay through one animal existance. He who devotes his life to the accumulation of knowledge, and the improvement of his mind, is a benefactor to his country, for from those noble minds will bud forth new ideas, and new inventions from which his fellow man, will derive superior advantages. When first the illeterate savage learned, that the white man could converse with his fellow white man, a thousand miles away, he was wonder stricken. At a more recent date, when first the lightning was made to play the post boy, and ride express, the most enlightened minds were astonished. When it was first asserted, by the

immortal Hahnemann, that the diseases of the body could be eradicated by the administration of infinitessimal doses of something, it was looked upon by the learned Doctors, as an impossibility, The causes were alike in each; it was new; they did not understand, they could not comprehend. There are some of the results, of the labors, of the students, who trimmed their midnight lamps, in their lonely cells. Have not their labors been rewarded? have not their brethern been benefited by it. The greatest advances that have been made in any one science, is in that of medicine. This is the result of many years of labor, both of body, and mind, of him who proclaimed the law "Similia Similibus Curantur," to be the only true and universaly successful mode of treating disease.

Suffering humanity has good reason to rejoice, and lift up her voice in heartfelt thanks, to the "giver of ever good, and perfect gift," for this benevolent, and munificent law of cure.

The day is passed when it is said, the remedies, necessary to cure, or relieve many diseases, are not uncomonly necessary evils, they remove disorder, by inducing another, and it is well, if the evil thus induced, is the smaller of the two.

There is no one, who will contemplate thoughtfully, and weigh unbiassed, the merits of the two schools, without coming to this conclusion, that Homoeopathy does more good, and less injury, to nature, in her battles with disease, than any other "pathy" extant. Some, in ridiculing the practice of prescribing infinitesimal doses, scoffingly say, it is faith that saves them. Although I am far from believing

that "faith" is the corner stone, upon which our heavenly law is founded, yet, I think there is much gained by our obtaining the confidence of the patient. If faith is the means through which our remedies operate, then we might just as well administer sugar in toto; but this is not the case, we cure by combating the totality of symptoms, But the cause is yet in a very imperfect state, much remains yet to be done, for its improvement, and it devolves upon the younger members of the profession, to do all in their power towards its advancement. A thing is more to be desired, than that those who go forth into the world, and enrol themselves under the banner of "Similia," should be men of excellent education. Those willing, and anxious to exert all their energies to promote the advancement of the cause.

done are more able to do this, than those who in their youth, have had their minds cultivated, and had the benefits of an early education. And here it is seen, that the training of the mind, has a bearing on their future success or failure in life; It is especially beneficial to those who choose the medical profession, for then the mind is irresistibly led to exert all its energies, in those investigations by which it may be enabled to grasp all the principles and facts of the science; And every difficulty which is surmounted, adds a new stimulus to the exertions of the intellect, urges it forward with delight, in the path of improvement, and thus invigorates the mental powers, and prepares them for engaging with spirit and alacrity, in every other investigation. To every one who wishes to excel in their profession, application, and industry, cannot be too much recommended.

Without this, it is impossible to excel in anything. No one ever became a bright star in the firmament of talents and literature, without previous labor and application. No enemy is so destructive, both to honorable attainments, and to the real, and spirited enjoyments of life, as that relaxed state of mind, which proceeds from indolence, and dissipation. He who is destined to excel in any profession will be distinguished for enthusiasm for that profession, which firing his mind with the object in view, will dispose him to relish every necessary labor. This honorable enthusiasm, should be cultivated by the students of medicine. If it be wanting in youth, manhood will flag exceedingly. This was the characteristic of the great men of antiquity; and this must distinguish moderns, who wish to imitate them.